

The Importance of Peer Review

As Biology Open (BiO) completes its first full year of publication, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our reviewers for their hard work (a full list of our reviewers can be found below). All these people have given us their valuable time for free and BiO could not exist without them; we are very grateful for all their efforts.

Peer review is a precious thing. Without it, Open Access journals such as BiO could end up being little more than ‘vanity’ publishers, publishing more or less any paper because to do so increases profits. Critics of author-pays Open Access are right to point out that such journals exist, but they are wrong to suggest that we will all end up drowning in a quagmire of irrelevant and irreproducible data as a result. Scientists are not fools and any journal that adopted this policy would rapidly lose credibility. For the record, 250 papers were submitted to BiO in 2012; so far, 137 have been accepted and 79 rejected (a rejection rate of ~40%).

Indeed, I would argue that peer review at BiO might actually be more effective than it is at some of the very high-impact factor journals. Our reviewers are asked to focus only on whether the conclusions of a paper are justified by the data presented. I have been amazed at how good our reviewers are at spotting any important deficiencies in a paper and suggesting how these can be addressed – often simply by performing an essential control or by toning down a particular conclusion. It is very rare that we accept a paper at BiO without asking for some changes or additional work to be done, but this is always aimed at ensuring that the conclusions are properly backed up by the data.

Several of our authors have commented on how refreshing it is to be able to write a paper honestly and openly, without having to stretch and/or omit data to ensure that an important and definitive conclusion is reached. As I have discussed before (Raff, 2012), given the extreme pressures on scientists to publish in journals with high impact factors, it is perhaps no surprise to learn that other scientists often find the data published in these journals difficult to reproduce (Begley and Ellis, 2012; Mullard, 2011). Thanks to our reviewers, I am very hopeful that this will be less of a problem for papers published in BiO.

References

- Begley, C. G. and Ellis, L. M. (2012). Drug development: raise standards for preclinical cancer research. *Nature* **483**, 531-533.
Mullard, A. (2011). Reliability of ‘new drug target’ claims called into question. *Nat. Rev. Drug Discov.* **10**, 643-644.
Raff, J. W. (2012). Publishing in the biomedical sciences: if it’s broken, fix it! *Biol. Open* **1**, 1055-1057.

Jordan W. Raff, Editor-in-Chief
University of Oxford, South Parks Road, Oxford OX1 3RE, UK
bio.editor@biologists.com

In January 2012, the first issue of BiO was published online. As we mark our first anniversary, we have published 154 articles. None of this would have been possible without the invaluable contribution of the more than 200 peer reviewers.

BiO is demanding of its reviewers in that we ask for reviews to be completed within seven working days. That more than 60% of them do so, with 90% within two weeks, is a testament to their dedication and professionalism.

As Publisher, we recognise the vital nature of the work that they do and acknowledge the fact that peer review is a cornerstone of scientific advancement. In 2011, the UK parliament discussed the issue of rewarding and incentivising reviewers (<http://bit.ly/TWYdbG>). One way to reward reviewers is to publicly thank them by name. We have chosen the first anniversary of our first issue to do just that. We thank them for their hard work and for managing to fit just one more task into their busy schedules.

Rachel Hackett, Managing Editor BiO
The Company of Biologists, 140 Cowley Road, Cambridge CB4 0DL, UK
bio@biologists.com

Reviewers in 2012

Ian Adams, MRC Human Genetics Unit, United Kingdom
Ahmed Ashour Ahmed, University of Oxford, United Kingdom
Takahiko Akematsu, York University, Toronto, Canada
Enrique Amaya, University of Manchester, United Kingdom
Kristin Artinger, University of Colorado Denver, USA
Sophie Astrof, Weill Medical College of Cornell University, USA
Nafisa Balasinor, National Institute for Research in Reproductive Health, India
Betsy Bancroft, Southern Utah University, USA
Andrew Bannister, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom
Orit Barneah, Ruppin Academic Center, Israel
Mark Bass, University of Bristol, United Kingdom
Bernd Baumann, Ulm University, Germany
Greg Beitel, Northwestern University, USA
Robert Belshaw, University of Oxford, United Kingdom
Timothy Bender, University of Virginia, USA
Regina Bestbier, University of British Columbia, Canada
Geir Bjørkøy, HiST, Norway
Jurgen Bolz, University of Jena, Germany
Ursula Bommhardt, University of Magdeburg, Germany
Thilo Borchart, Max Planck Institute for Heart and Lung Research, Germany
Gerhard Braus, Georg-August-University Gottingen, Germany
W. Ted Brown, New York State Institute for Basic Research, USA
Colin Brown, University of Newcastle, United Kingdom
Keith Brown, University of Bristol, United Kingdom
Julia Buck, Oregon State University, USA
Brian Calvi, Indiana University, USA
Marina Campione, University of Padova, Italy
Fernando Casares, University Pablo de Olavide, Spain
Michael Cheetham, University College London Institute of Ophthalmology, United Kingdom
Ruth Chiquet-Ehrismann, Friedrich Miescher Institute, Basel, Switzerland
Jean Cohen, CNRS, France
Eric Cole, St Olaf College, USA
Joan Comella, Vall d'Hebron Research Institute, Spain
David Costantini, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom
David Crews, University of Texas at Austin, USA
Giovanni D'Angelo, Telethon Institute of Genetics and Medicine, Italy
Kim Dale, University of Dundee, United Kingdom
Jamie Davies, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom
Helen Dawe, Exeter University, United Kingdom
Johan De Rooij, Hubrecht Institute, The Netherlands
Mauro Degli Esposti, University of Manchester, United Kingdom
Robert Denver, University of Michigan, USA
Jacqueline Deschamps, Netherlands Institute for Developmental Biology, The Netherlands
Eileen Devaney, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom
Mary Donohoe, Cornell University, USA
Carlos Dotti, VIB Center for the Biology of Disease, Belgium
Cynthia Downs, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel
Viji Draviam, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom
Wolfgang Driever, University of Freiburg, Germany
Kyle Elliott, University of Manitoba, Canada
Todd Evans, Weill Medical College of Cornell University, USA
Susan Evans, University of Adelaide, Australia
Caroline Fabre, University of Oxford, United Kingdom
Anna Ferrer, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, USA
Ann Foley, Weill Medical College of Cornell University, USA
Velia Fowler, The Scripps Research Institute, USA
Robert Friesel, Maine Medical Center Research Institute, USA
Fabrizio Gabbiani, Baylor College of Medicine, USA
Alejandra Garcia-Gasca, CIAD, Mexico
Arieh Gertler, The Hebrew University, Israel

Pietro Ghezzi, Brighton and Sussex Medical School, United Kingdom
Allen Gibbs, University of Nevada, USA
Marco Giovannini, House Research Institute, USA
Jean-Antoine Girault, Institut du Fer, Moulin, INSERM, France
Mary Goll, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, USA
Yukiko Gotoh, University of Tokyo, Japan
Tamar Goulet, University of Mississippi, USA
Dimitris Grammatopoulos, University of Warwick, United Kingdom
Paul Greenwood, Colby College, USA
Chrissy Hammond, University of Bristol, United Kingdom
Tony Harris, University of Toronto, Canada
Kevin Harvatine, Penn State University, USA
Shigetsugu Hatakeyama, Hokkaido University Graduate School of Medicine, Japan
Dana Hawley, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, USA
Bernd Heinrich, University of Vermont, USA
Jan Hemmi, University of Western Australia, Australia
Clarissa Henry, University of Maine, USA
Thomas Holstein, Heidelberg University, Germany
Marko Horb, Marine Biological Laboratory, USA
Douglas Houston, University of Iowa, USA
Alan Howe, University of Vermont, USA
Danwei Huangfu, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, USA
Masahito Ikawa, Osaka University, Japan
Javier Irazoqui, Massachusetts General Hospital-Harvard Medical School, USA
Antonio Jacinto, University of Lisbon, Portugal
Dagan Jenkins, University College London, United Kingdom
Anton Jetten, NIEHS, NIH, USA
Tian Jin, NIAID, NIH, USA
Wang Jiqiu, Ruijin Hospital, China
Zhu Jun, University of Wyoming, USA
Philipp Kahle, Hertie Institute for Clinical Brain Research, Germany
Chrysi Kanellopoulou, NIH, USA
Anna Kashina, University of Pennsylvania, USA
Nancy Kedersha, Brigham and Women's Hospital-Harvard Medical School, USA
Vladimir Kostal, Biology Centre of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Czech Republic
Justin Kumar, Indiana University, USA
Tilo Kunath, MRC Centre for Regenerative Medicine, United Kingdom
Alexander Kurze, University of Oxford, United Kingdom
Pavithra Lakshminarasimhan, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom
Tommy Lam, University of Oxford, United Kingdom
Irina Larina, Baylor College of Medicine, USA
Roberto Latini, Mario Negri Institute for Pharmacological Research, Italy
Rudolf Leube, RWTH Aachen University, Germany
Brian Lewis, NCI-CCR, NIH, USA
Lawrence Loeb, University of Washington, USA
Hernan Lopez-Schier, Helmholtz Zentrum Munchen, Germany
Martin Lowe, University of Manchester, United Kingdom
Yuchun Luo, University of Colorado Denver, USA
Giuseppe Lupo, University of Rome La Sapienza, Italy
Samantha Lycett, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom
Laura Machesky, CRUK Beatson Institute for Cancer Research, United Kingdom
Jesse Mager, University of Massachusetts, USA
William Mair, Harvard School of Public Health, USA
Arindam Majumdar, Karolinska Institute, Sweden
Jean-Bernard Manent, INSERM, France
Meghan McGee-Lawrence, Mayo Clinic, USA
Timothy Megraw, Florida State University, USA
Bjoern Menger, Medical School Hannover, Germany
Ralph Meyer, University of Pennsylvania, USA
Domenico Migliorini, University of Geneva, Switzerland
Takashi Mikawa, University of California San Francisco, USA

Marco Milan, IRB Barcelona, Spain
Dana Miller, University of Washington, USA
Justin Molloy, MRC-NIMR, United Kingdom
Ignacio Moore, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, USA
Andrea Morash, McMaster University, Canada
Werner Muller, University Medical Center of the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany
MonnMonn Myat, Weill Medical College of Cornell University, USA
Kinichi Nakashima, Nara Institute of Science and Technology, Japan
Jan Nedergaard, Stockholm University, Sweden
Juergen Neesen, Medical University of Vienna, Austria
Erich Nigg, University of Basel, Switzerland
Leo Nijtmans, Nijmegen Center for Mitochondrial Disorders, The Netherlands
Jeremy Niven, University of Sussex, United Kingdom
Stefania Nobili, University of Florence, Italy
Scott Nowak, Kennesaw State University, USA
Tomasz Nowakowski, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom
Sonja Nowotschin, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, USA
Kathleen O'Connor, University of Kentucky, USA
Edel O'Toole, Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry, United Kingdom
Michela Ori, University of Pisa, Italy
Maddy Parsons, Kings College London, United Kingdom
Gianandrea Pasquinelli, University of Bologna, Italy
Andrew Peden, University of Sheffield, USA
Isabel Peset, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom
Bjorn Pieper, University of Oxford, United Kingdom
Raymond Poot, Erasmus MC, The Netherlands
Edwin Price, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA
William Prinz, NIH-NIDDK, USA
Ian Prior, University of Liverpool, USA
Autun Purser, Jacobs University, Germany
Terence Rabbitts, University of Oxford, United Kingdom
Isaac Rabinovitz, BIDMC-Harvard Medical School, USA
David Raible, University of Washington, USA
Vesna Rajkovic, University of Novi Sad, Serbia
Praveen Raju, Weill Medical College of Cornell University, USA
Thomas Rando, Stanford University, USA
Joshua Rappoport, Birmingham University, United Kingdom
Christina Rathke, Philipps-University Marburg, Germany
Angel Raya, The Institute for Bioengineering of Catalonia, Spain
Nicole Rebscher, Marburg University, Germany
Michael Reed, Tufts University, USA
Monique Rijnkels, Baylor College of Medicine, USA
Henry Roehl, University of Sheffield, United Kingdom
Nela Rosic, The University of Queensland, Australia
Tatiana Rostovtseva, NICHD, NIH, USA
Aurelien Roux, University of Geneva, Switzerland
Aimee Ryan, Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre, Canada
Stefan Schulte-Merker, Hubrecht Institute, The Netherlands
Taiichiro Seki, Nihon University, Japan
Nenad Sestan, Yale University School of Medicine, USA
Christopher Shaw, Institute of Psychiatry, United Kingdom
Guojun Sheng, RIKEN, Japan
Takashi Shimizu, Hokkaido University, Japan
Gordon Simpson, University of Dundee, United Kingdom
Shankar Srinivas, University of Oxford, United Kingdom
Klaus Steger, University of Giessen, Germany
Reimer Stick, University of Bremen, Germany
Brian Storrie, University of Arkansas, USA
Brian Stramer, Kings College London, United Kingdom
Xin Sun, University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA
Atsushi Suzuki, Kyushu University, Japan

David Swanson, University of South Dakota, USA
Ji Sze, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, USA
Kazufumi Takamune, Kumamoto University, Japan
Koji Tamura, Tohoku University, Japan
John Tattersall, Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, United Kingdom
Gerhard Technau, University of Mainz, Germany
David Turner, University of Michigan, USA
Akiyoshi Uemura, Kobe University Graduate School of Medicine, Japan
Taro Uyeda, National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology, Japan
Teresa Valencak, Veterinary University Vienna, Austria
Douglas Vernimmen, The Roslin Institute, United Kingdom
Christoph Viebahn, Gottingen University, Germany
Christian Voigt, Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research, Germany
Naoki Watanabe, Tohoku University, Japan
Roland Wedlich-Soldner, Max-Planck-Institute of Biochemistry, Germany
Scott Weed, West Virginia University Health Sciences Center, USA
Brant Weinstein, NICHD, NIH, USA
Deneen Wellik, University of Michigan Medical Center, USA
Andreas Winterpacht, University Hospital Erlangen, Germany
Dieter Wolf, Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute, USA
Robert Wootton, University of Aberystwyth, United Kingdom
Howard Worman, Columbia University, USA
Michiaki Yamashita, National Research Institute of Fisheries Science, Japan
Deborah Yelon, University of California San Diego, USA
Jeanne Zeh, University of Nevada, USA
Yong Zhang, Chinese Academy of Sciences, China

Biology Open 2, 1-5

doi: 10.1242/bio.20134093

© 2013. Published by The Company of Biologists Ltd.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the
Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial Share Alike License
(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0>)